



THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-2000

16 FEB 1968

POLICY

Dr. Joshua Lederberg, President  
The Rockefeller University  
1230 York Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Joshua:

Your letter of 8 February proposed holding one of the meetings of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences subgroup on biological weapons arms control at USAMDRIID laboratories at Fort Detrick. As you know, the U.S. has been a leader in shaping international consensus on achieving greater transparency in the conduct of permitted biological defense work. I therefore approve your request, subject to normal security and logistical requirements.


Although not a requirement for approval, I would urge you and your group to seek as a condition for the visit to Fort Detrick a commitment from the Soviets that they open up one of their recently declared facilities for a similar visit by your party during the next round of discussions. We invariably insist on reciprocity when arranging visits by Soviets to our installations.

As you are probably aware, in a recent submission to the United Nations, the Soviets declared a large number of facilities, including Ministry of Defense sites at Sverdlovsk and Zagorsk, as facilities with P4 containment laboratories or engaged in "permitted research." I would urge you to seek a reciprocal visit at one of the facilities listed in the Soviet submission that most closely corresponds to Fort Dietrick and to insist that the scope and extent of the two visits be identical.

As you are also aware, despite our interest in greater transparency, we are convinced that such efforts do not constitute a basis for amending or "fixing" a patently unverifiable treaty. We see such exchanges of visits and information as improving, but not fundamentally altering, the situation. Soviet actions and the march of technology have made the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention little more than the embodiment of a norm of behavior we wish all civilized nations would observe.

To facilitate arrangements for the May meeting, I have asked Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Jim Hinds (697-2247) and his staff to work with you.

Sincerely,

  
Fred C. Ikle

cc: Mr. Hinds  
COL Huxsoll, USAMRIID